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The Enrichment center is a separate facility for gifted children. They attend for one day each week during the school year. The curriculum is flexible so that changes can be made according to current events or new scientific developments. The first criterion for selection is intelligence, the second is achievement. These are determined by a carefully selected series of tests. Third is a teachers recommendation. Educators are concerned that absence from regular school to attend such a special program may affect overall achievement.

For this study three groups were compared; one group had attended the center for one year, a second experimental group had attended for longer and a third group had qualified but had not taken part in the program. They were matched according to grade placement, age and sex. Comparison of average achievement tests after the experience in the program shows the group with the longest time in program highest, the second experimental group second highest in all averages. To determine long range effects of the program a comparison was made of test results from two years later and the results again indicate there was no detrimental effect on children who participated.

This study was not an attempt at evaluation of this program, because the enrichment program centers on developing characteristics such as creativity, originality, critical thinking, and leadership which are very difficult to measure. It does seem apparent, though that a gifted child can attend an enrichment program for part of the school week without detrimental effect on his total academic achievement.

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The Effect of Enrichment on the Academic Achievement of Superior and Gifted Children

A Study Compiled by:
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Volusia County, Florida
March 27, 1963
Revised September 23, 1963

The Effect of Enrichment on the Academic Achievement of Superior and Gifted Children

Program

For the past several years, Volusia County has operated an Instructional Enrichment Center as a separate facility for superior and gifted children. This Center is located in Daytona Beach and serves children from thirteen schools in the Halifax area. Children served range from grade 3 through grade 7. They attend classes at the Center one full day each week. Transportation is provided by the parents.

The program at the Center is built around a core curriculum. The curriculum is flexible and changes each year to be attuned to current events, new scientific developments, and regional and international situations. No attempt is made to parallel the course of study in regular schools. Emphasis is placed upon creativity and habits of study which will lead toward self-direction in acquiring a superior education.

Selection

In considering a student for placement in the Gifted Child Program, the first criterion to be met is that of intelligence. When a child is referred to the Center, a study is made of all intelligence scores which are available to his home school, and includes scores received on the California Test of Mental Maturity. These scores serve as a preliminary screening. If the child's I.Q. potential appears promising he is scheduled for further testing by the Enrichment Center staff.

The first test administered is the SRA Test of Primary Mental Abilities. The form of the test, Elementary or Intermediate, is determined by the student's chronological age. If the student scores 125 or above on this test he is next given the Kuhlmann-Anderson I.Q. Test. The following batteries are administered as recommended for gifted children by the Master Manual; Battery D, second grade students, Battery E, third grade students, Battery F, fourth grade students, Battery G, fifth grade students and Battery H, sixth grade students.

Children still being considered at the end of these two tests now have two I.Q. scores which have resulted from carefully controlled tests. If both scores are high there is strong support for a conclusion as to the mental capacity of the child. It is the kind of evidence necessary in making a decision about placing a child in a special education class.

The second criterion of selection is the child's overall achievement score as indicated by a recognized achievement test. Children having an averaged I.Q. of 130 and above must show an overall acceleration of 1.5 over their current grade placement. Children with an overall acceleration of 2.0 over their current grade placement will also be eligible for the program if they have an averaged I.Q. score of 125-129.

The third criterion of selection is a recommendation by the child's teacher that he is emotionally and socially ready for special work.

Study

Many educators have been concerned over the possibility that academic achievement might be adversely effected in those students who participate in an enrichment program conducted entirely apart from regular schools, and which required students to be absent from regular classes twenty per cent of the school year. A unique situation exists in Volusia County that allows us to explore this possibility.

Each year, approximately 500 children are tested for possible inclusion in the enrichment program. Of these, approximately 125 meet the aforementioned entrance criteria. Due to limitations such as the size of the Enrichment Center, number of teachers employed at the Center, optimum enrollment figures, and voluntary refusal to participate, many children who meet these criteria do not enroll in the enrichment program.

In this study, three groups of children were used. One group consisted of 72 children who attended the Center for a period of from one to four years during 1958 through 1961 (Experimental Group A). The second group consisted of 47 children who attended the Center for a period of one year beginning in the fall of 1960 (Experimental Group B). The third group was composed of 74 children who met the entrance criteria in the years of 1958 through 1961 but remained in regular classrooms (Control Group). These groups were matched as equally as possible according to grade placement, age, and sex.

The California Achievement Test scores of each child in Group A and in the Control Group were compiled for the years of 1959 through 1962. This test is administered during the month of September each year, so the recorded scores would reflect academic growth that was achieved during the previous year. The total scores on each subtest for each group were then averaged to form a basis for comparison. The scores of Experimental Group A ranged from .5 to 1.3 higher than scores of the Control group.

	Reading Average	Arithmetic Average	Mechanics English	Spelling
Experimental Group A	8.7	8.4	8.9	8.3
Control Group	8.2	7.5	7.6	7.7
Difference	.5	.9	1.3	.6

A second set of test scores were compiled so that a comparison could be made of results attained by Experimental Group A, Experimental Group B, and the Control Group. The scores received on the California Achievement Test administered in 1961 were used to determine the possible influence of one year of enrichment on Experimental Group B. With the exception of the Reading Average score, all other scores received by Group B fell between the scores received by Group A and the Control Group.

	Reading Average	Arithmetic Average	Mechanics English	Spelling
Experimental Group A	8.6	7.9	9.1	8.1
Experimental Group B	8.6	7.5	8.9	8.0
Control Group	8.3	7.4	8.6	7.8

Fall 1962

A third set of test scores were compiled in order to determine the carry-over or long range effect of enrichment on academic achievement. Scores received on the 1962 Ninth Grade State-wide Test were used to determine if a difference existed between three groups of youngsters who fell within the categories already sighted. The test results of 66 children (22 in each group) who had remained in Volusia County were used. It should be remembered that two years had lapsed since any of these students had been exposed to our formalized enrichment program. The scores below are totals that each group received in the six areas tested.

	Rdg.	Lang.	Arith. Comp.	Arith. Prob. Solving	Social Studies	Science
Exper. Gr. A	2073	2091	2054	2109	2054	2015
Exper. Gr. B	1769	1870	1804	1874	1778	1708
Control Gr.	1922	2015	1748	1792	1688	1615

This study was not an attempt to evaluate our enrichment program. It is realized that an enrichment program for gifted children cannot be adequately evaluated if the measuring instruments are not adequate or appropriate to measure the unique nature of such a program. The use of improper or inadequate measuring instruments can result in not giving full credit to the differences which the special program may have really brought about in the children. Enrichment programs for the gifted are highly centered about the development of such characteristics as creativity, originality, ability to do critical thinking, and leadership. Any evaluation of a special enrichment program must contain measures of these characteristics. Unfortunately, these characteristics are difficult to measure because proper evaluative devices are few and are not considered perfected.

It does seem apparent, though, that it is possible for a gifted child to attend an enrichment program for part of the school week without detrimental effect on his total academic achievement. Such skills as leadership, creativity, and originality which may accrue concomitantly would certainly make this venture worthwhile.